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Rees O'Neill, James

Rees Ritt, Martin

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IN FROM THE COLD



'The Spy Who ...' This Movie Investment Will Pay Off in Spades

By JAMES O'NEILL Jr.

Martin Ritt, a maker of movies, seems to be a curio in the film-making trade — he'd rather make a good movie, his way, than let a script slip from his hands for a profit into hands which he does not trust.

"I bought the rights to John Le Carre's 'The Spy Who Came In From The Cold' when it was still on wet galley-proofs for \$28,000. When the book came out and the reviews were in, I was offered by a competitor \$400,000 for my rights to the book. I simply said 'no, I'm going to make the movie.' And I made it."

Mr. Ritt's investment, which was viewed by the local trio of screen reviewers Thursday, will pay off, in spades. It's better than the book.

EXPLAINED

At a luncheon after the film — which opens Dec. 23 at the Trans-Lux and the Playhouse — Mr. Ritt explained how he had come to buy the book.

"I was fascinated by it. The whole story hinges on one of the most frightening aspects of our 'civilized society.' There have been countless numbers of spy-

type yarns and movies and TV shows, but none of them has really explored the matter of the spy business until this book.

"Being a spy, as Mr. Le Carre points out, is not such a clean or glamorous business. Nor are the ethics employed by all governments much different from those used by our enemy.

"Richard Burton was a natural for the role. He's had some hard luck in recent pictures and needed something good. This was it. And while Mr. Burton's salary — \$750,000 — was the biggest item on the budget, he was well worth the money. I hope you'll agree ..."

In spades, Martin. In spades. It's the best role Burton has ever had in motion pictures. He's totally believable. Any man worth the identity will understand him.

'GOLDEN BOY'

Martin Ritt goes back a few years in the acting and directing business. He first came into prominence in 'Golden Boy,' and not the one Sammy Davis is doing in New York now!

He acted in some 150 TV dramas and directed more than

100. Then he moved to movies, the only truly creative dramatic medium extant. There is little challenge on Broadway these days, and the idiot box is so totally moronic that both may be dismissed, so Mr. Ritt is now in the film business, and doing just fine, thank you.

An old friend of Patricia Neal, who won an Oscar for her work in Martin Ritt's 'Hud,' he reports that she is well on the way to recovery from her

recent stroke in England and will make it all the way.

"She's a really great lady."

And with this he fled to a TV studio, leaving his interviewers to discuss the dreadful level to which "culture" has fallen now that it is in the hands of incompetents.